

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Overview

Claims 1-48 are pending in the application, and claims 2-9 and 25-44 were previously withdrawn from consideration. By this amendment, claims 1 and 11 have been amended, and claims 10 and 50-56 have been canceled.

This after-final amendment does not raise new issues that would require further consideration and/or search, since the proposed amendments incorporate previously recited limitations from dependent claims into the independent claims and these limitations have been previously considered and searched by the Examiner.

Applicants believe the amendments made herein add no new matter, full support therefore being shown in the drawings and specification as filed.

Reconsideration and reexamination of the application is respectfully requested in view of the amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1, 10, 12-14, 20, 45-47, 49 and 56 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Patent Application Publication No. 09-010492 to Sanka ("Sanka"). Claims 1, 12-16, 20, 45-49 and 56 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,811,198 to Baltes ("Baltes"). Claims 50- 56 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,510,778 to Cotton ("Cotton"). Claims 11, 15, 16, and 21-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sanka in view of U.S. Patent No. 502,237 to Proctor ("Proctor"), as evidenced by Baltes and U.S. Patent No. 5,466,058 to Chan ("Chan"). Claims 17-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sanka or Baltes in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,720,108 to Rice ("Rice"), as evidenced by Baltes and Chan. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections, and request reconsideration of the claims.

The §102 Rejection of Claims 1, 10, 12-14, 20, 45-47, 49 and 56 Over Sanka

Claims 1, 10, 12-14, 20, 45-47, 49 and 56 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Patent Application Publication No. 09-010492 to Sanka ("Sanka"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

"A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described in a single prior art reference." *Verdegaal Bros. V. Union Oil Co. Of California*, 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987). "The identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as contained in the ... claim." *Richardson v. Suzuki Motor, Co.*, 868 F.2d 1226, 1236, 9 USPQ2d, 1913, 1920 (Fed. Cir. 1989).

The elements must be arranged as required by the claim." MPEP §2131.

Sanka discloses a cabinet (20) having a lower section (B) for storing a washing machine (40) and an upper section (A) defining a clothes drying chamber. Items to be dried are placed in the upper section (A), and a clothes dryer (30) circulates air through the upper section (A) to dry the clothes. The upper section (A) and the lower section (B) are separated by a partition (70).

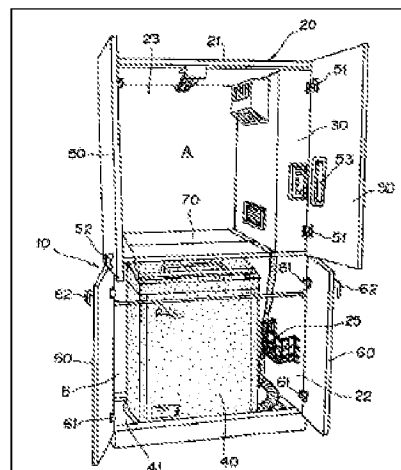


FIG. 1 OF SANKA

The partition (70) of Sanka is divided into two plates (71) and (72) with a hinge junction (73) therebetween. Rollers (74) protrude from the front portion of the side edges of plate (71). These rollers translate within rails (76) such that the partition (70) of Sanka is movable with a bi-folding, or double-pivoting action. As shown in Figures 1 and 4, the bi-folding partition (70) is movable from a horizontal position inside the cabinet to a vertical position along the inside of rear wall (23) of the cabinet. In both positions, the partition (70) is inside the cabinet (20).

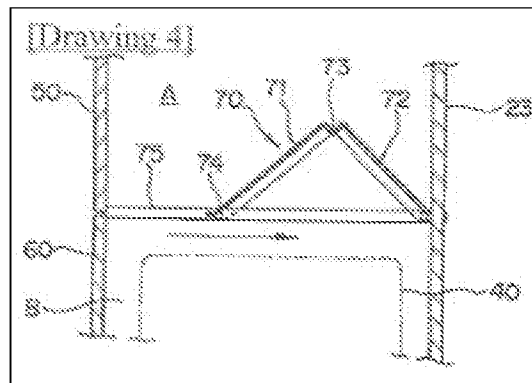


FIG. 4 OF SANKA

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitation of claim 10. Claim 1 calls for an integrated laundry center comprising an integrated cabinet assembly having a plurality of panels that define a plurality of discrete spaces. The discrete spaces include a washer discrete space so dimensioned as to house a washing machine, a clothes dryer discrete space so dimensioned as to house a clothes dryer, a slidable shelf that is slidable into and out of the cabinet assembly, and at least one supplemental drying discrete space. An air moving device is arranged to deliver air to the supplemental drying discrete space. As Sanka does not disclose every claim element, the anticipation rejection must fail.

The partition (70) of Sanka is not a slidable shelf as recited in claim 1. Additionally, the partition (70) is not slidable to a position that is out of the cabinet as recited in claim 1. For at least the reasons presented above, Sanka does not anticipate claim 1, and claim 1 is patentable over Sanka. Claims 12-14, 20, 45-47 and 49 depend directly or indirectly from claim 1 and are, therefore, not anticipated by Sanka for at least the same reasons Sanka does not anticipate claim 1.

Claim 56 has been cancelled without prejudice such that the §102 rejection of claim 56 over Sanka is moot.

The §102 Rejection of Claims 1, 12-16, 20, 45-49 and 56 Over Baltes

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitation of claim 10 such that the §102 rejection of claim 1 over Baltes is moot. Claims 12-16, 20 and 45-49 depend directly or indirectly from claim 1 and are, therefore, not anticipated by Baltes for the same reason Baltes does not anticipate claim 1. Claim 56 has been cancelled without prejudice such that the §102 rejection of claim 56 over Baltes is moot.

The §102 Rejection of Claims 50- 56 Over Cotton

Claims 50-56 have been cancelled without prejudice such that the §102 rejection over Cotton is moot.

The §103 Rejections of Claims 11, 15-19 and 21-24

Claims 11, 15, 16, and 21-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sanka in view of Proctor, as evidenced by Baltes and Chan. Claims 17-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sanka or Baltes in view of Rice, as evidenced by Baltes and Chan. Claims 11, 15-19 and 21-24 depend directly or indirectly from claim 1. Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are allowable as depending from an allowable base claim.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed or rendered moot. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to all of the outstanding rejections, and Applicants therefore respectfully request that this amendment be entered.

No fees or extensions of time are believed to be due in connection with this filing. However, please consider this a request for any extension inadvertently omitted, and charge any additional fees to Deposit Account No. 23-1660.

It is respectfully submitted that the claims are allowable over the prior art of record. Early notification of allowability is respectfully requested.

App. No.10/686,798
Resp. dated March 23, 2007
Reply to Office Action dated January 25, 2007

US20000055-1
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Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: March 23, 2007

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